

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A cargo protecting system for a pickup truck, the system comprising:
  - a metal support structure, the metal support structure being in a fixed position relative to a pickup truck;
  - a bed floor fixedly supported by the metal support structure, the bed floor including a first support surface for directly supporting cargo, the first support surface being substantially coplanar with a plane;
  - a first chamber disposed substantially beneath the plane, the first chamber being defined by a first shell having first and second openings, the first chamber being accessible from above the plane through the first opening, the first and second openings being of sufficient size and dimension to allow the passage of a spare tire; and
  - a second chamber disposed substantially directly beneath the bed floor and adjacent to the second opening, the second chamber being separate from the first chamber and accessible from the first chamber through the second opening, the second chamber being configured to provide a storage location directly beneath the bed floor for substantially an entire spare tire.
2. The system of claim 1 wherein the metal support structure is integral with a unibody of a pickup truck.
3. The system of claim 1 wherein the bed floor comprises plastic.
4. The system of claim 3 wherein the bed floor further comprises metal reinforcement components.
5. The system of claim 1 wherein the bed floor integrally provides at least a portion of the first shell.
6. The system of claim 1 wherein the second chamber is at least partially defined by a second shell.

7. The system of claim 6 further comprising a tray configured to support a spare tire within the second chamber, wherein the tray is configured to slidingly engage the second shell to facilitate easier movement of a spare tire between the second chamber and the first chamber.

8. The system of claim 6 wherein the second shell is fastened to the first shell with an adhesive.

9. The system of claim 6 wherein the first and second shells are supported by the metal support structure.

10. The system of claim 1 wherein a closure member is provided in hinged association with the bed floor, the closure member including a second support surface for directly supporting cargo and the closure member being configured to selectively cover at least a portion of the first opening.

11. The system of claim 10 wherein the closure member further comprises an opening mechanism for moving a securement mechanism between locked and unlocked positions, the securement mechanism and the opening mechanism both being disposed entirely below the second support surface when the closure member is closed.

12. The system of claim 11 wherein the opening mechanism comprises a handle.

13. The system of claim 11 wherein the opening mechanism comprises a key cylinder.

14. The system of claim 1 further comprising at least one side member extending upwardly from a location adjacent to at least a portion of the bed floor.

15. The system of claim 14 wherein the side member is separate from the bed floor.

16. The system of claim 14 wherein the side member is integral with the bed floor.

17. The system of claim 14 further comprising a headboard member.

18. A cargo protecting system for a pickup truck, the system comprising:

a metal support structure, the metal support structure being in a fixed position relative to a pickup truck;

5 a bed floor fixedly supported by the metal support structure, the bed floor including a first support surface for directly supporting cargo, the first support surface being substantially coplanar with a plane;

a first chamber disposed substantially beneath the plane, the first chamber being defined by a first shell having a first opening, the first chamber being accessible from above the plane through the first opening;

10 a closure member hingedly associated with the bed floor and including a second support surface for directly supporting cargo, the closure member being moveable between a first position in which the second support surface aligns substantially coplanarly with the first support surface and at least partially covers the first opening, and a second position in which the closure member is at least partially  
15 removed from the first opening to provide access to the first chamber through the first opening;

a securement mechanism moveable between locked and unlocked positions for selectively locking the closure member in the first position; and

20 an opening mechanism for moving the securement mechanism between the locked and unlocked positions, the securement mechanism and the opening mechanism both being disposed entirely below the second support surface when the closure member is in the first position.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the metal support structure is integral with a unibody of a pickup truck.

20. The system of claim 18 wherein the bed floor comprises plastic.

21. The system of claim 20 wherein the bed floor further comprises metal reinforcement components.

22. The system of claim 18 wherein the bed floor integrally provides at least a portion of the first shell.

23. The system of claim 18 wherein the opening mechanism comprises a handle.

24. The system of claim 18 wherein the opening mechanism comprises a key cylinder.

25. The system of claim 18 wherein the first shell further comprises a second opening, the first and second openings being of sufficient size and dimension to allow the passage of a spare tire.

26. The system of claim 25 further comprising a second chamber separate from the first chamber and disposed substantially directly beneath the bed floor and adjacent to the second opening, the second chamber being accessible from the first chamber through the second opening.

27. The system of claim 26 wherein the second chamber is configured to provide a storage location directly beneath the bed floor for substantially an entire spare tire.

28. The system of claim 26 wherein the second chamber is at least partially defined by a second shell.

29. The system of claim 28 further comprising a tray configured to support a spare tire within the second chamber, wherein the tray is configured to slidably engage the second shell to facilitate easier movement of a spare tire between the second chamber and the first chamber.

30. The system of claim 28 wherein the second shell is fastened to the first shell with an adhesive.

31. The system of claim 28 wherein the first and second shells are supported by the metal support structure.

32. The system of claim 18 wherein the closure member further comprises a first sealing element that attaches to the underside of the closure member around

substantially the entire outer perimeter of the closure member, and further comprises a second sealing element that attaches to the underside of the closure member around at least a portion of the outer perimeter of the closure member.

33. The system of claim 18 further comprising at least one side member extending upwardly from a location adjacent to at least a portion of the bed floor.

34. The system of claim 33 wherein the side member is separate from the bed floor.

35. The system of claim 33 wherein the side member is integral with the bed floor.

36. The system of claim 33 further comprising a headboard member.

37. A cargo protecting system for a pickup truck, the system comprising:

a metal support structure, the metal support structure being integral with a unibody of a pickup truck;

a bed floor fixedly supported by the metal support structure, the bed floor including a first support surface for directly supporting cargo, the first support surface being substantially coplanar with a plane;

a first chamber disposed substantially beneath the plane, the first chamber being defined by a first shell having first and second openings, the first chamber being accessible from above the plane through the first opening, the first and second openings being of sufficient size and dimension to allow the passage of a spare tire;

a second chamber disposed substantially directly beneath the bed floor and adjacent to the second opening, the second chamber being separate from the first chamber and accessible from the first chamber through the second opening, the second chamber being configured to provide a storage location directly beneath the bed floor for substantially an entire spare tire;

a closure member hingedly associated with the bed floor and including a second support surface for directly supporting cargo, the closure member being moveable between a first position in which the second support surface aligns

substantially coplanarly with the first support surface and at least partially covers the  
20 first opening, and a second position in which the closure member is at least partially  
removed from the first opening to provide access to the first chamber through the first  
opening;

a securement mechanism moveable between locked and unlocked positions for  
selectively locking the closure member in the first position; and

25 an opening mechanism for moving the securement mechanism between the  
locked and unlocked positions, the securement mechanism and the opening  
mechanism both being disposed entirely below the second support surface when the  
closure member is in the first position.